

# **1998 Large Truck Crash Overview**



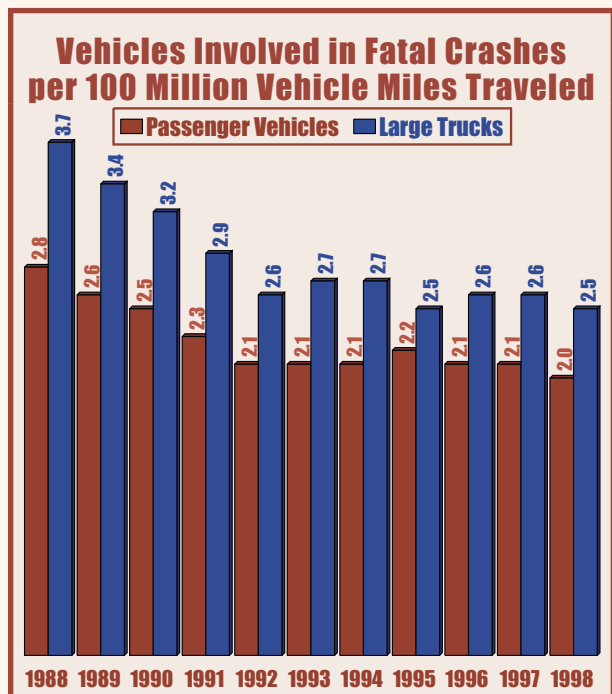
**Analysis Division  
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation**

# 1998 Large Truck Crash Overview

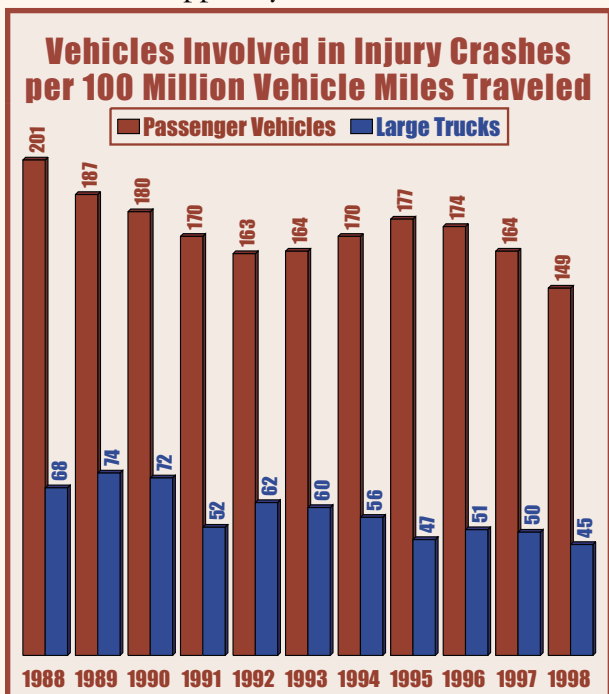
The mission of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is to promote the safe operation of commercial vehicles on our Nation's highways. Of all the people killed in motor vehicle crashes in 1998, 13% (5,374) died in crashes that involved a large truck. Another 127,000 people were injured in crashes involving large trucks. Only about 14% of those killed and 23% of those injured were occupants of large trucks.

## Trends

► **Fatal Crashes.** From 1988 to 1998, the number of large trucks involved in fatal crashes declined from 5,241 to 4,935—down 6%. The number of large trucks in fatal crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled declined in these years from 3.7 to 2.5—down 32%. The same rate for passenger vehicles fell from 2.8 to 2.0—down 29%.



- **Injury Crashes.** From 1988 to 1998, the number of large trucks involved in injury crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled declined by 34%, while the rate for passenger vehicles dropped by 26%.



## Vehicles

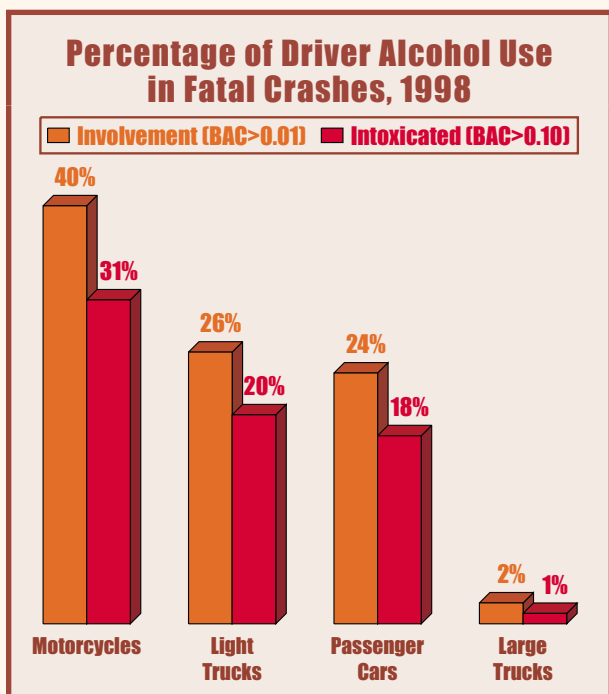
- In 1998, large trucks drove 7% of all vehicle miles traveled and made up 3% of all registered vehicles in the United States. In motor vehicle crashes, large trucks represented:
- 9% of vehicles in fatal crashes
  - 2% of vehicles in injury crashes
  - 4% of vehicles in property-damage-only crashes.
- Truck tractors pulling semi-trailers accounted for 65% of the trucks involved in fatal crashes and about 50% of the trucks involved in nonfatal crashes.
- Doubles (truck tractors pulling a semi-trailer and a full trailer) were only 3% of trucks

involved in crashes, and triples (tractors pulling a semi-trailer and two full trailers) accounted for less than 0.5% of all trucks involved in crashes.

- Only 4% of trucks involved in fatal crashes and trucks involved in nonfatal crashes were carrying hazardous materials (HM). HM was released from the cargo compartment in about one-third of these crashes.

## Drivers

- Only 1% of the drivers of large trucks involved in fatal crashes in 1998 were legally intoxicated (blood alcohol content of 0.10 grams per deciliter or higher), as compared with 18% of passenger car and 20% of light truck drivers in fatal crashes.
- Three-fourths (76%) of the drivers of large trucks involved in fatal crashes with passenger vehicles were reported by police as wearing their safety belts, compared with one-half (49%) of passenger vehicle drivers.



- In fatal crashes between large trucks and passenger vehicles, one to four crash-related factors were cited for 26% of the truck drivers. In comparison, one to four crash-related factors were noted for 82% of the passenger vehicle drivers involved. The three most common factors cited for drivers of both large trucks and passenger vehicles were the same: driving too fast, running off the road or out of the traffic lane, and failure to yield the right of way.

## **Crash Environment**

- Speeding (exceeding the speed limit or driving too fast for conditions) was a factor in 23% of the fatal crashes involving a large truck, compared with 31% of all fatal crashes. Eighteen percent of injury crashes involving a large truck and 18% of all injury crashes were speed related.
- No adverse weather conditions were reported for 83% of the fatal crashes and for 85% of the nonfatal crashes involving large trucks in 1998. Rain was the most common adverse condition.
- More than two-thirds (69%) of the fatal crashes involving large trucks—and four-fifths (80%) of the nonfatal crashes—occurred during the day.
- The vast majority of the fatal crashes involving large trucks (85%) and of the nonfatal crashes (88%) occurred on Monday through Friday.
- For 79% of the fatal crashes involving large trucks, and for 74% of the nonfatal crashes, the first harmful event was a collision with another vehicle in transport.
- Rollover was the first harmful event for only 4% of the fatal crashes and only 3% of the nonfatal crashes involving large trucks.

- More than one-fourth (27%) of fatal crashes that took place in work zones—areas of construction, maintenance, or utility activity—involved a large truck.
- Potentially 34% of all two-vehicle crashes between a large truck and a passenger vehicle took place in the “No-Zone” areas around the truck.

## Definitions

**Large Trucks:** Trucks over 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR).

**Passenger Vehicles:** Passenger cars and light trucks—such as vans, sport utility vehicles, and pickup trucks—with 10,000 pounds GVWR or less.

**No-Zone:** The danger areas around large trucks (and buses) where crashes are more likely to occur.

## Data Sources

**Fatal Crash Data:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS).

**Nonfatal Crash Data:** National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, General Estimates System (GES); and FMCSA, Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS) crash file.

**Vehicle Miles Traveled:** Federal Highway Administration.



**For more information, contact the Analysis Division at (202) 366-1861.**